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[P. XIV is blank]

INTRODUCTION.

121 In 1903 Sir Bampfylde Fuller, then Chief Commissioner
122 of Assam, proposed, and the Government of India sanctioned, the preparation of a series of monographs on the more important tribes and castes of the Province, of which this volume is the first. They were to be undertaken by writers who had had special and intimate experience of the races to be described, the accounts of earlier observers being at the same time studied and incorporated; a uniform scheme of treatment was laid down which was to be adhered to in each monograph, and certain limits of size were prescribed.

114 Major Gurdon, the author of the following pages, who is also, as Superintendent of Ethnography in Assam, editor of the whole series, has enjoyed a long and close acquaintance with the Khasi race, whose institutions he has here undertaken to describe. Thoroughly familiar with their language, he has for three years been in charge as Deputy-Commissioner of the district where they dwell, continually moving among them, and visiting every part of the beautiful region which is called
643 by their name. The administration of the Khasi and
101 Jaintia Hills is an exceptionally interesting field of official responsibility. About half of the district, including the country around the capital, Shillong, is outside the limits of British India, consisting of a collection of small states in political relations, regulated by treaty with the Government of India, which enjoy

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643 almost complete autonomy in the management of their
101 local affairs. In the remainder, called the Jaintia Hills, which became British in 1835, it has been the wise policy of the Government to maintain the indigenous system of administration through officers named *dolois*, who preside over large areas of country with very little interference. All the British portion of the hills is what is called a "Scheduled District" under Acts XIV and XV of 1874, and legislation which may be inappropriate to the conditions of the people can be, and is, excluded from operation within it. In these circumstances the administration is carried on in a manner well calculated to win the confidence and attachment of the people, who have to bear few of the burdens which press upon the population elsewhere, and, with the peace and protection guaranteed by British rule, are able to develop their institutions upon indigenous lines. It is now more than forty years since any military operations have been necessary within the hills, and the advance of the district in prosperity and civilization during the last half-century has been very striking.

177 The first contact between the British and the
648 inhabitants of the Khasi Hills followed upon the
175 acquisition by the East India Company, in consequence of the grant of the *Dīwānī* of Bengal in 1765, of the district of Sylhet. The Khasis were our neighbours on the north of that district, and to the north-east was the State of Jaintia,* ruled over by a chief of Khasi lineage, whose capital, Jaintiapur, was situated in the plain between the Surma river and the hills. Along this frontier the Khasis, though not averse from trade, and in possession of the quarries which furnished the chief

113 * The previous history of the Khasi State of Jaintia, so far as it can be traced, will be found related in Mr. E. A. Gait's *History of Assam* (1906), pp. 253-262.

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177 Europeans had entered the hill territory of the Khasi
648 tribes, and the account of the march, quoted in
175 Pemberton's Report,* is the earliest authentic information which we possess of the institutions of the Khasi race. Dr. Buchanan-Hamilton, who spent several years at the beginning of the 19th Century in collecting information regarding the people of Eastern India, during which he lived for some time at Goalpara in the Brahmaputra Valley, confused the Khasis with the
● [101] Garos, and his descriptions apply only to the latter people. The name Garo, however, is still used by the inhabitants of Kamrup in speaking of their Khasi neighbours to the South, and Hamilton only followed the local usage. In 1826 Mr. David Scott, after the expulsion of the Burmese from Assam and the occupation of that province by the Company, entered the Khasi Hills in order to negotiate for the construction of a road through the territory of the Khasi *Siem* or Chief of Nongkhlāw, which should unite Sylhet with Gauhati. A treaty was concluded with the chief, and the construction of the road began. At Cherrapunji Mr. Scott built for himself a house on the plateau which, two years later, was acquired from the Siem by exchange for land in the plains, as the site of a sanitarium.† Everything seemed to promise well, when the peace was suddenly broken by an attack made, in April 1829, by the people of Nongkhlāw on the survey party engaged in laying out the road, resulting in the massacre of two British officers and between fifty and sixty natives. This led to a general confederacy of

* Pp. 218-220. It appears from p. 219 that Mr. Scott's report is responsible for the erroneous statement (often repeated) that the mountaineers "called by us Cossyahs, denominate themselves Khyee." This second name is in fact the pronunciation current in Sylhet of the word *Khāsi*, *h* being substituted for *s*, and should be written *Khāhi*.

† In Mr. Scott's time it was usual to speak of such a place as a "Sanatary."

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THE KHASIS

SECTION I.

HABITAT.

101 THE Khasis reside in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills district of
162 Assam. They number 176,614 souls, which total is made up as :—

Khasis	107,515
Syntengs	47,883
Christian Khasis	17,125
Khasis inhabiting other districts	4,091
	176,614

131 The Khasi and Jaintia Hills district is situated between
162 25° 1′ and 26° 5′ North Latitude, and between 90° 47′ and 92° 52′
563 East Longitude. It contains an area of 6,157 square miles, with a total population at the Census of 1901 of 202,250 souls. In addition to the Khasis there are some members of Bodo tribes inhabiting parts of the district.

The Lyngam tribe appears to have been reckoned in 1901 as Khasi, there being no separate record at the last Census of these people.

101 The district is split up into two divisions, the Khasi Hills
131 proper and the Jaintia Hills. The Khasi Hills form the
[133] western portion of the district and the Jaintia Hills the
563 eastern. The Khasis inhabit the Khasi Hills proper, and the Syntengs, or Pnars, the Jaintia Hills. The latter hills take their name from the Rajas of Jaintia, the former rulers of this part of the country, who had as their capital Jaintiapur, a place situated at the foot of the Jaintia Hills on the southern side, which now falls within the boundaries of the Sylhet

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district. The Lynngams inhabit the western portion of the Khasi Hills proper. A line drawn north and south through the village of Nongstoin may be said to form their eastern boundary, and the Kamrup and Sylhet districts their northern and southern boundaries, respectively. The people known as *Bhois* in these hills, who are many of them really Mikirs, live in the low hills to the north and north-east of the district, the term "Bhoi" being a territorial name rather than tribal. The eastern boundary of the Lynngam country may be said to form their north-western boundary. The Wars inhabit the precipitous slopes and deep valleys to the south of the district. Their country extends along the entire southern boundary of the district to the Jadukata, or Kenchi-iong, river where the Lynngam territory may be said to commence towards the south. There are some Hadem colonies in the extreme eastern portions of the Jaintia Hills. It is these colonies which are sometimes referred to by other writers as "Kuki Colonies." They are settlers from the North Cachar Sub-division of the Cachar district within recent years. It is possible that the title Hadem may have some connection with *Hidimba*, the ancient name for the North Cachar Hills.

APPEARANCE.

The colour of the Khasi skin may be described as being usually brown, varying from dark to a light yellowish brown, according to locality. The complexion of the people who inhabit the uplands is of a somewhat lighter shade, and many of the women, especially those who live at Nongkrem, Laitlyngkot, Mawphlang, and other villages of the surrounding high plateaux, possess that pretty gipsy complexion that is seen in the South of Europe amongst the peasants. The people of Cherrapunji village are specially fair. The Syntengs of the Jaintia Hills are darker than the Khasi uplanders. The Wars who live in the low valleys are frequently more swarthy than the Khasis. The Bhois have the flabby-looking yellow skin of the Mikirs, and the Lynngams are darker than the Khasis. The Lyngams are probably the darkest complexioned people in the

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plains, jealous of their power, brave in action, and have an aversion to falsehood."

Khasis of the interior who have adopted Christianity are generally cleaner in their persons than the non-Christians, and their women dress better than the latter and have an air of self-respect about them. The houses in a Christian village are also far superior, especially where there are resident European missionaries. Khasis who have become Christians often take to religion with much earnestness (witness the recent religious revival in these hills, which is estimated by the Welsh missionaries to have added between 4,000 and 5,000 converts to Christianity), and are model Sabbatarians, it being a pleasing sight to see men, women, and children trooping to church on a Sunday dressed in their best, and with quite the Sunday expression on their faces one sees in England. It is a pleasure to hear the sound of the distant church bell on the hill-side on a Sunday evening, soon to be succeeded by the beautiful Welsh hymn tunes which, when wafted across the valleys, carry one's thoughts far away. The Welsh missionaries have done, and continue to do, an immense amount of good amongst these people. It would be an evil day for the Khasis if anything should occur to arrest the progress of the mission work in the Khasi Hills.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.

The Khasis inhabit the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, although there are a few Khasi settlers in the neighbouring plains districts. The Census Report of 1901 gives the following figures of Khasi residents in the plains:—

Cachar	333
Sylhet	3,083
Goalpara	4
Kamrup	191
Darrang	10
Nowgong	29
Sibsagar	62
Lakhimpur	22
Lushai Hills	77
North Cachar	32
Naga Hills	62

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Garo Hills	117
Manipur	69
Total	4,091*

The following information regarding the general aspect of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills district, with some additions, is derived from Sir William Hunter's Statistical Account of Assam. The district consists almost entirely of hills, only a very small portion lying in the plains. The slope of the hills on the southern side is very steep until a table-land is met with at an elevation of about 4,000 feet at Cherrapunji. Higher up there is another plateau at Mawphlang. This is the highest portion of the hills, some villages being found at as high an elevation as close on 6,000 feet above sea level. Fifteen miles to the east of Mawphlang, and in the same range, is situated the civil station of Shillong, at an average elevation of about 4,900 feet. The elevation of the Shillong Peak, the highest hill in the district, is 6,450 feet above sea level. On the northern side of the hills are two plateaux, one between 1,000 and 2,000 feet below the level of Shillong, and another at an elevation of about 2,000 feet above sea level. In general features all these plateaux are much alike, and consist of a succession of undulating downs, broken here and there by the valleys of the larger hill streams. In the higher ranges, where the hills have been denuded of forest, the country is covered with short grass, which becomes longer and more rank in the lower elevations. This denudation of forest has been largely due to the wood being used by the Khasis for fuel for iron smelting in days gone by. The Government, however, has taken steps to protect the remaining forests from further spoliation. A remarkable feature is the presence of numerous sacred groves situated generally just below the brows of the hills. In these woods are to be found principally oak and rhododendron trees. The fir-tree (Pinus Khasia) is first met with on the road from Gauhati to Shillong, at Umsning, at an elevation of about 2,500 feet. In the neighbourhood of Shillong the fir grows profusely, but the finest fir-trees are to be seen

* The figures for Khasi population in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills district will be found under "Habitat."

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SECTION III.

LAWS AND CUSTOMS.

TRIBAL ORGANIZATION.

101 [197] THE inhabitants of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills may be said to be divided into the following sections:—Khasi, Synteng or Pnar, Wár, Bhoi, and Lyngam. These divisions represent collections of people inhabiting several tracts of country and speaking dialects which, although often deriving their origin from the Khasi roots, are frequently so dissimilar to the standard language as to be almost unrecognizable. The above sections may be sub-divided as follows:—The Khasis into the inhabitants of the central high plateau, Cherra and Nongstoin, Maharam, Mario, Nongkhlaw, and the neighbouring Siemships. The Syntengs or Pnars may be divided as follows:—Into Syntengs proper, Nongtungs, and Kharwangs; the Wárs into Wár proper, and Wár Pnar; the Bhois into Jinthongs, Mynris, Ryngkhongs, and the Khasi-Bhois, i.e. Khasis who inhabit the low country to the north of the district, which is called generally the "Bhoi." The Lyngams are a separate division. They must not be confused with the Dkos or Hanas who are Garos. It must, however, be remembered that the Jinthong, Mynri, and Ryngkhong Sub-divisions of the Bhoi division are not Khasi, but Mikir, i.e. they belong to the Bodo or Bara group. The Lyngams are half Khasis and half Garos, and the Dkos or Hanas are Garos who observe the Khasi custom of erecting memorial stones. The above tribes and sub-tribes are not strictly endogamous, nor are they strictly exogamous, but they are more endogamous than exogamous; for instance, Syntengs more often marry Syntengs than Khasis, and *vice versâ*, and it would be usually considered derogatory for a

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Khasi of the Uplands to marry a Bhoi or Wár woman, and a disgrace to marry a Lynngam. These divisions are sub-divided into a number of septs, taking Mr. Risley's definition of "sept" as being the largest exogamous division of the tribe. It will, however, be more convenient to speak of these septs as "clans," the word "clan" having been used in other parts of this Monograph and by other writers.

Many of the clans trace their descent from ancestresses or *kiaw* (grandmothers), who are styled *ki Iawbei-Tynrai*, lit. grandmothers of the root (i.e. the root of the tree of the clan). In some of the clans, the name of this ancestress survives; take as instances the Mylliem-ngap and Mylliem-pdah clans of the Khyrim State, the names of the ancestresses of the clans being *ka ngap* (honey, i.e. the sweet one), and *ka pdah* respectively. This tribal ancestress, as will be seen in the paragraph of the monograph dealing with ancestor-worship, is greatly reverenced, in fact, she may almost be said to be deified. The descendants of one ancestress of the clan, *Ka Iawbei Tynrai*, are called *shi kur* or one clan. We then come to the division of the *kpoh* or sub-clan, all the descendants of one great grandmother (*ka Iawbei Tymmen*), being styled *shi kpoh*. The next division is the *iing* (lit. house) or family. It is almost invariably the case that the grandmother, her daughters and the daughter's children, live together under one roof, the grandmother during her life-time being the head of the house. The grandmother is styled *ka Iawbei Khynraw*, or the young grandmother, to distinguish her from the other two grandmothers, *ka Iawbei-tynrai* and *ka Iawbei-tymmen* who have been mentioned above. The young grandmother, her daughters and their children are said to belong to *shi iing*, one house, the word *iing* in this instance possessing amongst the Khasis the same significance as the English word *family*.

We will now see how the Khasi clan (*kur* or *jaid*) grew out of the Khasi family (*iing*). Let us take the example of the great Diengdoh clan of Cherra. Disregarding the myth that the Diengdohs are descended from a mermaid, it may be stated that there seems to be a fairly general belief amongst the Diengdohs that their first ancestress or *kiaw* came from the

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of a Garo marriage. The Lyngams, unlike the Garos, do not observe which way the beaks of the fowls turn when they are thrown on the ground after being sacrificed. The Lyngams, like the Khasis, take auguries from the entrails of the fowls and the pig. After these ceremonies are over, the Lyngam pair are allowed to cohabit. The cost of an ordinary Lyngam marriage is from Rs. 30 to Rs. 40. The marriage system in vogue among the Lyngams may be described as a mixture of the Khasi and Garo customs. As has already been stated, the Lyngams are a mongrel breed of Khasis and Garos.

CEREMONIES ATTENDING DEATH.

The death customs of the Khasis are not only very elaborate, but possess a significance of their own, it is, therefore, necessary to describe them in detail; they are as follows:—

A member of the family bends down towards the ear of the apparently deceased person and calls him or her by name three times, to make sure that death has occurred. If no answer comes, the family laments, for it is then concluded that the person is really dead. The body is then bathed in warm water from three earthen pots and is reverently laid on a mat (*japung*), where it is dressed in white cloth, a peculiar feature of the dressing being that the waist-cloth and turban are folded from left to right, and not from right to left, as in the case of the living. An egg called *u'leng kpoh* is placed on the stomach of the deceased, and nine fried grains, of *riw hadem*, or Indian corn, are tied round the head with a string. The rich place ear-rings in the ears and other jewellery on the body of the deceased, it being necessary that this jewellery should be specially made for the occasion, and they deck the corpse with valuable cloths. A cock, *u'iar krad lyati* (literally the cock that scratches the way), is sacrificed, the idea being that a cock will scratch a path for the spirit to the next world. A sacrifice of a bull, or of a cow in case the deceased is a woman, (*u* or *ka masi pynsum*,) follows. Portions of the left leg of the fowl and the lower part of the jaw of the bull or cow are kept, to be placed afterwards in the *mawshieng*, or bone,

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539 in the Rupatylli channel at Duwara. She was covered with shame, and she slackened her speed and split herself up into five branches, namely, ka Umtong, ka Torasa, ka Pasbiria, ka Kumarjani, and ka Duwara. Umiam did this so as to hide her shame from Umngot. This is how the river Rupatylli was formed at Duwara, to be a token that Umngot had been victorious in her contest with Umiew.*

leh khnang ba'n búh rieh ia la ka jingkhein burom ha khymat ka Umngot. Kumta sa long ka wah Rupatylli ha Duwara namar ka long ka dak ka jingjop ka Umngot ia ka Umiew.

The Kupli (Kopili).

539 133 484 782 The Kopili river rises in the "Black Mountains," † and flows northwards into the Brahmaputra. It is the boundary between the country of the Syntengs and that of the Hadems. ‡ Any traveller who wishes to cross this river must leave behind him the rice which he has taken for his journey, and any other food that he may have taken with him. If he does not do so, even if he crosses the river at án unforbidden point, he is liable to offer a sacrifice to the Kopili goddess. The people offer to her three fowls and three goats outside the village, i.e. one to the goddess herself, and the other two to her sons, U Shyngkram and U Jali; and five fowls, that

Shaphang Ka Kupli, U Shyngkram bad U Jali, ki Khún jong ka.

Ka Kupli ka long ka wah na ki lúm baiong bad ka túid da artet ha ka wah Brahmaputra. Ka long ka púd ia ka ri Synteng bad ka ri Hadem ha mihngi. Uno-uno u nongleit jingleit uba kwah ban jám ia kane ka wah Blei-Kupli u don kam ba'n bred noh ia la u kháw-ryneng ha shiliang wah, bad ia ki kynja jingbám baroh phar, te un sa klan ia ka. Lada u'm da leh kumta, la'u klan na ka jaka ka b'ym sang ruh un háp jingaingúh ha ka. Ki khún-ki-hajár ia ka ba lum lái s'iar, lái blang kawei ia ka, marmar uwei ia U Shyngkram bad U Jali; bad san s'iar ba ki'n ia bám sngewbha baroh lái

* Both rivers, Umngot and Umiew, or Umiam, have their sources in or close to the Shillong Peak. The word "*Rupatylli*" signifies in Khasi a solid silver necklace of a peculiar shape. In order to appreciate this pretty tale thoroughly, the reader ought to view the river "Rupatylli" from the heights of Laitkynsew, or Mahadeo, whence it is to be seen glistening in the sun like a veritable *rupatylli* or silver necklace.

† These mountains are the high hills which lie to the east of the Jowai Sub-Division, and which form part of the boundary line between the Khasi and Jaintia Hills District and North Cachar.

‡ The word Hadem is possibly a corruption of "Hidimba," the old name for North Cachar.

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Khasi Hills.	Jaintia Hills.
1. Lynkah (Barpani or Khawang)	Kyllao. (Suhtnga).
2. Nongkrem	Pynsing.
3. Um-long (Maolong the hat at Laban)	Maolong. (Nartiang).
4. Ranghep (Ieu-bah at Cherra) (Mawtawar in Mylliem) (Unsaw in Nongkhlaw)	Maosiang. (Jowai).
5. Shillong (Laitlyngkot)	Maoshai. (Shangpung).
6. Pomtih or Pomtiah (Mawkhar, small market)	Pynkat. (Mynso).
7. Umnih	Thym-blein.
8. Yeo-duh (Mawkhar, large market)	Ka-hat. (Jaintiapur).

In the Wár country, markets are usually held every fourth day, e.g. at Nongjri, Mawbang, Tyllap, and Shella. At Theria the market is held every Friday, and at Hat-majai, or Bholagunj, every Tuesday.

THE LYNNGAMS.

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Although mention has been made incidentally in various parts of this monograph of Lynngam customs, it has been thought necessary to give the Lynngams a separate chapter, as these people differ so very greatly from the Khasis in their manner of life, and in their customs. *Lynngam* is the Khasi name: the Garo name for the Lynngams is *Megam*. There

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are several *Megam* villages in the north-eastern corner of the Garo Hills district, and there is regular communication kept up between these villages and the Lynngam inhabitants of the Khasi Hills district. The Lynngams must not be confused with the *Hána* or *Námdaniya* Garos who inhabit the low hills to the north of the Khasi Hills district, and are called by the

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Khasis *Dko*. All Lynngams claim to be Khasis, they dislike being called Garos; but although it is true they speak what may be called a dialect of Khasi, and observe some of the Khasi customs, the Lynngams are more Garo than Khasi. Before

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proceeding further, it should be stated that the Assamese of Boko call the Lynngams *Núniyá* Garos, all hill people being Garos to the Assamese of that region, without distinction

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or difference. It is owing to these three different names being used for the same people that there has been so much confusion about Lynngams previously; e.g. at one census they were named *Lynngam*, at another they received the appellation of Garo, and at a third enumeration they were called Khasis. In Section I. the habitat of the Lynngams has been roughly defined. It is impossible to define the Lynngam country exactly, because these people are continually shifting their village sites owing to the exigencies of *jhum* cultivation, which has been described in Section II. Some of the Lynngams preserve a tradition that they originally came from the Kamrup plains. It is interesting that a people, like the Garos in so many respects, should have the same idea as the Garos as to the hills on the south bank of the Brahmaputra not always having been their abode. The Garo legend is that they dwelt for some years in the Goalpara and Kamrup plains after they descended from Thibet, and before they moved to the Garo Hills; and there is unmistakable evidence of their occupation of both districts in the shape of certain Garo villages on both banks of the Brahmaputra for some little distance up the river. If, as I suspect, the Lynngams are an offshoot of the Garos, it is, perhaps, possible that they entered the Khasi Hills much in the same way as the Garos entered the hill district to which they have given their name. The Lynngams are much darker than the Khasis, and possess the Thibeto-Burman type of feature often to a marked degree. It is not extraordinary that they should have adopted some of the Khasi customs, for the Khasis, being the stronger people, would in course of time be bound to influence them in this respect. That the Lynngams observe the matriarchate and erect (some clans) memorial stones is not peculiar, because the Garos, like the Khasis, are also a matriarchal people (to a limited degree), and the custom of erecting memorial stones is not confined to the Khasis, for other hill tribes in Assam observe the practice, e.g. certain Naga tribes and the Mikirs; and the Garos themselves put up carved posts, called *kima*, in honour of the departed. Although there is not much intermarriage between the Khasis and the Lynngams nowadays, perhaps in days gone by there was a mixture of blood, the result being the hybrid race we are now

(c) Ibid

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The Market Life of the Khasi

(with ten original photographs by the author)

by P.F. Stegmiller, S.V.D., Munich

[101] The mountains in the northeast corner of India which lie between the valleys of the Brahmaputra and the Barak are inhabited by a [161] tribe, the Khasi, numbering about 200,000 people. Although they rarely cross the borders of their homeland and live almost cut off from their [484] neighbors, they have an active traffic amongst themselves and travel a lot. This traveling is determined by the very distinct market life of the Khasi. It is truly the pulse beat of the people. The rest of their homelife, their activities, and their private, public, and religious life. (1) Time is divided accord-

1. P.F. Stegmiller, "Aus dem religiösen Leben der Khasi' /The Religion Life of the Khasi/, Anthropos, 1921-1922, pp. 425 ff.

ing to the market; the market replaces the daily newspaper and the information service; the market unites the individual villages; the market offers a living to many and for many has become a source of wealth.

443 782 How much the Khasi depend on a thriving market may be seen in their prayers which are spoken every year at the great state sacrifices in honor of the god Shillong by the sacrificer (lyngdoh) presenting the service: "O god, Shillong! Thou who receivest this prayer, this sacrifice of goats, of fowl, of kou and rynsi (a kind of bread of rice flour or cornmeal with pounded sugar), of utensils used in the preparation, as thou has given them to the royal

Family Property and Maternal Rights

/127/ by C. Becker S.D.S., Wurzburg

The fall of 1910 and the entire following year found the distinguished head of the Ethnographic Museum in Munich, to whom this anniversary volume is dedicated, on a research and collection trip in the extensive and inexhaustible territories of India. He was accompanied by his active wife, who served as his scientific assistant. From Burma, a mine of rich, ethnographic treasure and where the greatest part of their Indian stay was spent, their journey led the research couple into Assam, situated in the northeast of India, a country of equal significance. Assam certainly belongs politically to anterior India, but forms a bridge to interior India both ethnographically and linguistically.

Among the mountain peoples who inhabit the chain of hills which traverses the length of present-day Assam, and which separates the two largest parts of the country from each other, the Brahmaputra Valley in the north and the Surma Plain in the south, is one of the most interesting and doubtless the most advanced of the tribes, the Khasi, who inhabit the so-called Khasi and Jaintia Mountains. It was in Shillong, the center of this area, which is now the capital of the country Assam under the English government, where towards the end of September, 1911, I first became acquainted with Professor D. L. Scherman and his wife and where a friendship of many years had its beginning. Therefore this little study will lead us to the Khasi Mountains, to its slopes overgrown with its peculiar pine trees, which receive greetings across the plains from the snow-crowned peaks of the Himalayas, which are flooded by the mighty waves of the Brahmaputra River and the alternating inundations of the Surma River. Here a contented and cheerful little people live who have maintained their own special characteristics in spite of the many European influences and those of neighboring cultures.

/128/ Of the entire population of 243,263 people, who form the inhabitants of the Khasi and Jaintâ Mountains (1), 203,855 are Khasi.

1. The following statistical estimates are taken from the Census of India 1921, Vol. III, Assam, (Shillong 1923) pp. I and II.

Of those, 37,852 have adopted Christianity, while the others are still adherents of ancient animistic cults, with the exception of somewhat

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Note on the Khasis, Syntengs, and allied Tribes, inhabiting the Khasi and Jaintia Hills District in Assam.—By Major P. R. T. Gurdon, Superintendent of Ethnography in Assam. (With plates III—IV).

[Read 3rd August, 1904.]

1. *Physical characteristics.*—The men are seldom tall; they are generally well made, and possess great strength of limb,—of leg in particular. Their features show a resemblance to those of the Japanese; their complexions are fair, noses flat, lips thick, and eyes very frequently obliquely set. The women are good-looking, of a buxom type, and are cheerful and pleasant-mannered. Children are sometimes exceedingly pretty. Khasis are inveterate chewers of *pán*,—both men, women, and children; the distances from place to place being measured by the number of betel-nuts that can be chewed on the journey. The hair of the males is shaved above the forehead pretty high up, and the remainder is gathered into a knot at the back of the head. Very few Khasis have much hair about the face. Both Khasis and Syntengs wear the sleeveless coat (*jymphong*) loin-cloth, *jain sliang* (a kind of

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR7 Khasi AR7

On the STONE MONUMENTS *of the* KHÁSI HILL TRIBES, *and on some of the Peculiar Rites and Customs of the People.* By Major H. H. GODWIN-AUSTEN, F.R.G.S., Deputy Superintendent Topographical Survey of India.

121 THE increasing interest that is taken at the present day in ethnology and the history of man in past and present ages, more particularly in the customs of semi-civilised races in distant quarters of the world as compared with the state of those races who dwelt in Europe in early historic times, has led me to put together the information I obtained regarding the people of the Khāsi Hill tracts. Their customs are peculiar, and the fact that they are among the very few who erect at the present day monolithic monuments, is alone of great interest.

This has not escaped the attention of different travellers, 122 officers of the Indian service and others who have visited that quarter of the Bengal Presidency, and from time to time papers have been published; these are scattered through a number of periodicals, and in no case is a complete record of these Hill people to be found.

Notices on the Garos and Khāsis, as well as many of the other tribes on the north-eastern frontier of Bengal, are generally very short, in some instances mislead, and in some cases do the peo- 152 ple, savages though they be, but little justice; in truth, there is very much to admire in these Hill people, they are in many ways, socially and physically, far above their Bengāli neighbours of the plains; intercourse with them is, in consequence, much pleasanter, easier, and has far greater interest; innate honesty and truth in their manners of dealing often crop out, more especially in villages well within the hills, where contact with the people of the plains is of rare occurrence.

101 I shall notice the best of these papers having reference to tribes inhabiting the range of hills running west to east, south of Assam, from the sharp southern bend of the Brahmaputra up to the Kopili and Diyung river, in long. 92 deg. 45 min., a length of some one hundred and sixty-five miles.

114 In the "Asiatic Researches," vol. iii, published so far back as 1792, is a very interesting paper on the Gāros, by Mr. John 113 Eliot; his travels, however, did not extend so far to the east as the Khāsias.

The Rev. A. B. Lish, a missionary of Cherra Poonjee, published an account of the Khāsias in the "Calcutta Christian Observer" for 1838, he gives an account of their mode of breaking eggs for omens, etc.

Neither in M'Cosh's "Topography of Assam," or in Robinson's "Assam," is any newer or better information afforded concerning

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR7 Khasi AR7

114 etc., when employed at heavy labour. Very much more decent is it than the thin gauze-like cloth worn by even the better class of Baboo in Calcutta, which makes hardly any pretence of concealing the private parts. I can speak for the Gāro women being particularly quiet and modest in their demeanour; and the young men on reaching a certain age, and until they marry, live and take their meals apart in a large house constructed for them; this is always the largest in the village, and where strangers are put up. This custom mitigates strongly against "their want of modesty", so often advanced, and proves, if anything, an advanced state of morality.

Again, in speaking of the Khasis and the looseness of their family and domestic relations, which are somewhat easy, the frequent changing of wives is not so common as might be supposed, and in the remoter villages I should say very rare.. There is a very strong force which militates against its frequent practice. The men of these tribes select their wives not for beauty and delicacy, but for their well-developed forms and hard-working qualities—those who can carry heavy loads throughout the day; and the more children she begets the better for the pair: they can cultivate as these grow up a larger area, and live in greater comfort.

[113] In the *Calcutta Christian Observer*, March, 1852, is to be found one of the best papers on the Khāsis, by the Rev. W. Pryse, who was attached to the We'sh Mission working both at Cherra Poonjee and Sylhet. A very good article appears in the *Calcutta Review* for 1856, vol. 27, being a review of the "Geology of the Khāsi Hills, with Observations on the Meteorology and Ethnology of that District," by Thomas Oldham, Superintendent of the Geological Survey of India. a work containing much valuable and interesting matter. An Introduction to the Khāsia Language, by the Rev. W. Pryse, is also included in the above review.

114 The various ways in which the word Khāsi has been spelt by 101 different writers, has no doubt puzzled many an European reader, and will be familiar no doubt to some in the form of Cossyah, Khassyah, Kasia, etc. The most correct has been adopted by the mission at Cherra Poonjee in their printed works in the language, and adopted in this paper.

101 They call themselves Ki Khási, and their country Ká Ri 197 Khási;* and without going out of our way to seek for a derivation of this word, may it not be derived from the Hindustani "Ghāsi"—grassy: the whole of the upper lands being of this nature, in contradiction to the forest-clad valleys and slopes of the outer hills both north and south. The Khásias never pro-

* Compare "Rhī", a mountain (Tibetan).

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR7 Khasi AR7

nounce the hard G ; and in all words of Hindustani origin this letter has the sound of K. 101 [197]

They are called by the tribes of Kúkis and Nágás on the west "Káro", the name they themselves have for the whole mass of hill people on their western side, the Gāros, though as we pass towards their confines, we find the names of local clans giving way to this general term which was not known to some of the villagers of West Nongstoin, who call the Gāros "Dékor."

The Gāro appellation for the Khāsis is "Dikkil" or "Digil"; and it was very interesting to find, after visiting the villages of both, that they mutually fear each other, and consequently border raids never occur. The Gāros owned that they feared the bow and arrow of their neighbour, a weapon they themselves are unacquainted with the use of.

The Khāsis always point to the east as the quarter from which they emigrated, but there is very little, if any, similarity with the languages of the people now occupying the hills on that side. [173] [197]

Before entering further on the subject matter of this paper, I must request my hearers or readers to remember that having no knowledge colloquially of the Khasi language, the information I give was obtained from natives who understood either English or Hindustani well. The greater part of the information was given me by a very intelligent man, a native inspector of schools in the district ; thus I hope that all errors that exist may be hereafter corrected by others who have been able to elucidate with greater exactness the meaning of their many different rites and superstitions. 115

Certainly the most striking objects of interest in the Khāsi Hills are the upright stone monuments that are to be seen all over the country; these, set up by the wayside, or in the villages, more frequently cutting the sky on prominent hills, with the large slabs horizontally set before them, at once recall the Druidical remains of our own island, northern France, etc., and lead one to marvel at the similarity of the custom, and to inquire its origin and design. Many who visit those hills take it at once for granted that they are the graves of illustrious men, or, after a vain endeavour to get some information from the coolies about them, let the matter rest, or finally believe that the ashes of the dead, to whose memory the monoliths are erected, are buried under the flat kind of altar or dolmen seen in front. 764 211

It is always a very difficult matter to obtain information from semi-civilised people on such a subject as their religious rites, especially if the inquirer is ignorant of their language. A slight knowledge of Hindustani on the part of the Khāsia villager, renders the attempt still more hopeless, and the information given quite erroneous.

10: Clarke U-3 (no date)1874 AR7 Khasi AR7

The STONE MONUMENTS *of the* KHASI HILLS. By C. B. CLARKE. [Communicated by Professor H. Fawcett, through Sir John Lubbock, Bart].*

131 THE Khasi Hills form a plateau, at a mean elevation of 4,500 feet above the sea, between the plain of Assam on the north and the plain of Sylhet on the south. They are inhabited by the
● 101 Khasi tribe, a people very distinct from the Hindoos north and south of them, and who are a branch of a race which extends eastward as far as South China. Immediately east of them are the Jaintea people, also called Sintengs, who are very closely allied in race and customs to the Khasi tribe. The
133 Jaintea country is physically a portion of the same plateau as the Khasi, and is only arbitrarily divided from it, and exhibits the same grassy hill-tops. The Khasi and Jaintea tribes together occupy the political district administered by the Deputy-Commissioner of Shillong, and the whole plateau is accordingly called the Shillong Plateau by Mr. Medlicott, the Dep.-Superintendent of the Geological Survey in India. Shillong is the English station which is the political capital. The plateau is remarkable for its freedom from the dense jungle which covers the neighbouring Himalayas at similar elevations; it is a fine rocky moor-like plateau, with isolated

* The woodcuts illustrating this paper have been kindly lent by Mr. Murray.

[p. 481]

Ll: Chattopadhyay E-4, 5 (no date) 1941 AR7 Khasi AR7

[p. 3]

CHAPTER I

According to traditions preserved by the local people, the Iangblah clan were the first settlers in Mawphlang. The Lyngdohs were invited to come and settle as the Iangblahs wanted priests to perform proper worship for their village. Other clans came later and settled in the State. These old clans are known as Khadar Kur. Myntris are elected from the following four clans—Iangblah, Khar Shiing, Khar Hunai and Khar Sohlia. The above traditions of the origin of the settlement were furnished by the myntri U Subu Rai, his sister's husband U Alisson and others. The list of Khadar Kur furnished by the myntri is noted below :—

(1) Iangblah.	(2) Lyngdoh.	(3) Khar Shiing.
(4) Khar Hunai	(5) Khar Sohlia.	(6) Khar Phannap.
(7) Khar Kynnie.	(8) Khar Sahkhar.	(9) Marbaniang.
(10) Khar Narbi.	(11) Khar Mawphlang.	(12) Khar Syntiew.

The genealogy of myntri U Subu Rai, of myntri U Orong Singh and others are shown at the end of this chapter. In collecting kinship terms, three questions were asked of the informant :

(*i*). What is the relationship of B to the informant A (and of A to B). This is shown in the tables as the kinship term.

(*ii*). What the informant A called B (and conversely). This is shown in the tables as the term of address.

(*iii*). How the informant A referred to the relationship of B to C, another relative. This is shown as the term of reference.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi (AR7 •
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PREFACE

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The purpose of this monograph is to present theoretical problems of Garo and Khasi social organization in relation to those of other matrilineal systems. In fact, the study of these two matrilineal systems has led me to enquire into many other matrilineal systems, as will appear throughout my discussion in Parts I and II. As a result, I think I have reached certain conclusions of theorical interest concerning matrilineal systems as a whole; these are presented in the last part of the book.

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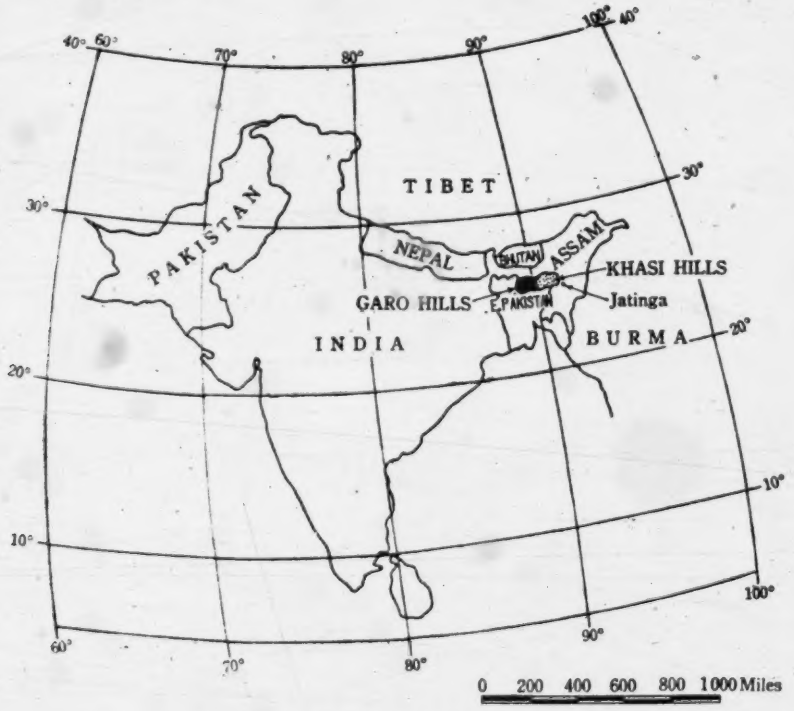

MAP 1. — *Location of the Garo Hills and the Khasi-Jaintia Hills.*

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The homeland of the Khasi is the hilly country situated in the northeast of India and known at present as the District of United Khasi and Jaintia Hills, under the Assam State Government. The area is bounded by the plains of the Kamrup and the Nowgong Districts to the north, by the Cachar Hills and East Pakistan (District of Sylhet) to the south, and by the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills Districts to the east. The Khasi and Jaintia Hills are divided politically into two subdivisions, with headquarters at Shillong for the Khasi Hills, and at Jowai for the Jaintia Hills, respectively. The peoples of both subdivisions are called "Khasi" in a broad sense, and are distinctly marked off from other neighbouring tribes and peoples by language and social structure. The population of the Khasi in the District is 363,599 *(Census of India, 1951, Assam)*. Their language belongs to one of the Mon group of the Austro-Asiatic family to which the Munda in central India also belongs.[1]

Though all Khasis share fundamentally the same language and social structure, their culture, dialects, economy, social usage, and political organization vary greatly, owing to the ecological and politico-historical differences among them. The United Khasi and Jaintia Hills are much higher than the neighbouring Garo Hills. The plateau of the Khasi Hills ranges from about 5,000 feet to 6,000 feet, of which

1. The *Census of India, 1951, Assam*, makes the following remarks on their language: "Their nearest kinsmen have been discovered to be the Palaungs, a tribe inhabiting one of the Shan States to the northeast of Mandalay on the middle Salween. Later the relationship of the Khasi language has been traced not only to the Mon-Khmer language, but also to the Nicobarese and several dialects spoken by some tribes in the Malay Peninsula. In Assam, this special form of speech is only found in the Khasi and Jaintias while nearly all the other primitive languages with which it is surrounded belong to the great Bodo family. The Khasi language is the only member of the Mon-Khmer family which possesses a grammatical gender distinguishing all nouns as masculine and feminine, and here also the feminine nouns immensely preponderate."

[P. 95]

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

133 the highest point is the Shillong Peak, 6,445 feet, covered with scrub,
137 grassland and forests (mostly oak, rhododendron and pine trees). The Jaintia Hills are considerably lower, with much flat land; wet paddy cultivation is practised here and there where sufficient water is available. From the plateau of the Khasi Hills northwards to the Assam Brahmaputra Valley there is a gentle slope covered with thick jungle, and the southern slope towards the Bengal plain is very steep, so that

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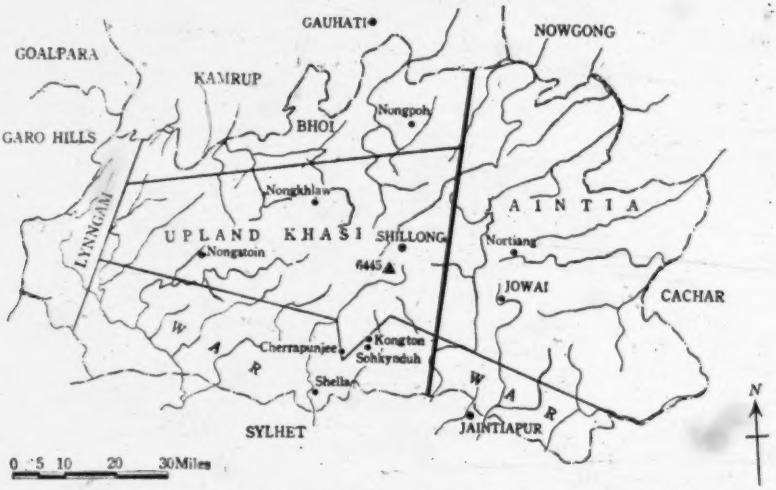

MAP. 8. — *Map of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills with Classification of Groups.*

133 the upland remained practically cut off from the plains until the
137 middle of the 19th century.

Following the geographical and ecological differences, the five
619 groups are segregated into fairly well-defined cultural areas, each developing a different economy and dialect:

[131]
[24]

1. The Jaintia[1] — associated mostly with wet rice cultivation.
2. The Khasi (upland Khasi) — practise potato cultivation with small-scale rice and maize cultivation.
3. The War — inhabit the southern slope of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills (they are called geographically the Khasi War and the Jaintia War). Due to the heavy rainfall, the soil is the most fertile in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. The Khasi War practise jhuming of which the main yield is millet. In the lower part of this area, pan-leaf, betel-nut, and orange gardens are cultivated. The Jaintia War practise wet rice cultivation like most of the Jaintias, as well as pan-leaf cultivation.

1. They are called also the Synteng or the Pnar.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

CHAPTER II

VILLAGE COMMUNITY

As models of a Khasi village community, I have taken my data for the discussion presented in this chapter from two villages situated in the Kadashinong area, Sohkynduh and Kongton, with comparative data from Shella and Jatinga villages.

Sohkynduh and Kongton are situated in one of the most secluded spots of the Khasi Hills and the economy is shifting cultivation, with millet as its main product. Only a few Christians are found; most of the population are pagans. Shella is situated on the southern border of the Khasi Hills, adjacent to Pakistan. Jatinga is in the North Cachar Hills, surrounded by patrilineal tribes, such as the Zemi-Naga, the Kuki and the Cacharee. The economy of both villages is pan-leaf and orange cultivation. In Shella, Hindu, Christian and pagan are found among the villagers almost in the same proportions, while the Jatinga villagers are all Christian. The two Kadashinong villages, Shella and Jatinga, differ from one another not only in their religious and economic aspects, but in overt culture, dialect and political organization as well. (Additional information concerning Shella and Jatinga is given in Appendix.) Shella and Jatinga are unique among Khasi villages and quite sophisticated, having been developed under a trading economy, with considerable contacts with other peoples, including Hindus. I selected these villages in order to ascertain how far the structural principle which operates in the Kadashinong villages can be found to act also in totally different economic and environmental situations.

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[101]
[245]
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[P. 101]

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

APPENDIX

SOME ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM SHELLA AND JATINGA

SHELLA

Shella is situated on the lowest of the southern slopes of the Khasi Hills, bordering on the Sylhet plain of East Pakistan. For centuries the people of Shella maintained close trading connections with the people of the plain, so that they have been much influenced by the Hindu. They have been to some extent divorced economically and culturally from their own people who live in the uplands and on higher part of the slopes. Actually, this is a natural result of their geographical location. From Cherrapunjee, the southern edge of the upland Khasi Hills, only a narrow footpath goes down to Shella. The altitude of Cherrapunjee is about 5,000 feet and of Shella from 500 to 1,000 feet, and the distance between them is 8 miles. The path descends very steeply and is full of hard stones. This difficulty of communication is also why the Hindu influence did not penetrate the upland Khasi, as in the case of the Jaintia Hills.[1]

This area has a unique political organization which differs from the majority of Khasi states who are traditionally ruled by the members of the Siem clan. Shella is organized as a confederation, called 'Shella Confederacy,' and consists of four local villages. The head of the village is called *wadadhar*, and is elected by the villagers every three years. The number of households of the Shella Confederacy was about 900 in January 1956. The names of the four villages and their *wadadhar* in 1956 were:

Name of village	*Name of wadadhar*
1. Shella	Devish Mohan Roy
2. Mushtoh	Ditojou Roy
3. Nongtrai	Orju Roy
4. Tyngnger	Jabuni Roy

Each village is divided into sections. For instance, Shella village has nine sections: (1) Jasir, (2) Disong, (3) Duba, (4) Jamau, (5) Nongrum, (6) Nongnong,

1. However, Shella was the only way out and the main gateway from the Khasi Hills to the plain; it was here that the British first entered the Khasi Hills. They proceeded from Shella to Cherrapunjee and made the latter headquarters of the Khasi Hills in 1833.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

wife who lives with him. [Shella] The Khasi woman lives with her mother. Some say the Khasi woman is his second wife, other say their marriage is not recognized by the public. 563

Actually, owing to the bad climate, very few non-Khasi live in this area. Besides the two non-Khasi just mentioned, there were a Bengalee tax collector and an Assamese Forest Officer, both of whom lived at Shella Bazaar. Bengalee villages are situated about five miles south of Shella. Except in the bazaar, Bengalee and Khasi have no social contact with each other, and intermarriages have been rare.

However, it is obvious that in the past the Khasi must have had many cases of intermarriage with Bengalee. Among the Khasi, there is a clan called 'Dkhar.' The term 'Dkhar' is also used for the peoples of the plains: Bengalee are called 'Dkhar' by the Khasi. They say that the Dkhar clan originated in Bengalee girls who married Khasi men and who went to live in the Hills. It is said that in older days, the Khasi often raided the Sylhet plain and kidnapped Bengalee girls as well as goods. In Bengalee records of Sylhet, Khasi appear as 'bloody Khasi.' Khasi old men say that in order to increase their population they did sometimes kidnap Bengalee girls, but that they treated these girls very nicely and kindly, no differently from their own people. Since they follow the matrilineal system, they decided to name their descendants 'Dkhar.' It is said that all the present Dkhar people are descendants of such marriages. The Dkhar are found more on the southern slopes of the Khasi Hills i.e. among the Wars. 101 563

It seems there were many reasons for the descendants by marriage between the Khasi and the Bengalee to become Khasi. First of all, it is said that in the olden days the Khasi wanted to increase the population by such marriages. At the same time, a Bengalee who married a Khasi became an outcast from his or her own society owing to the caste system, and this inevitably made them Khasi. Secondly, the Khasi were primarily grouped into the *iing*, and they considered the marriage relation as of secondary importance. Hence it was rather difficult to remove by marriage a Khasi man or woman from their native place. Thirdly, Khasi could hardly live in the plain where no betel-nut or pan-leaf gardens were available; they could not engage in rice cultivation in the plain, as the technique is entirely different from the cultivation of betel-nut or pan-leaf. Moreover, they said they could not stand the heat in the plain. Therefore, the orientation of intermarriages was always towards the Khasi community: the Khasi brought outsiders to their own land; they did not themselves leave.

Such a marked tendency on the part of the Khasi to remain attached to their own homeland, is in no way contradictory with the phenomena of their migration to places outside the Khasi Hills, owing to the exploitation of their homeland and to the increase in population. The formation of Jatinga represents such an instance; there are also the cases of modern Khasi women from sophisticated urban areas, who easily leave their homeland, after marriage with a non-Khasi; this also appears in the following data on Jatinga. 161 167 [563]

JATINGA

Jatinga is a Khasi village situated in the North Cachar Hills, three miles west from Haflong, the headquarters of the North Cachar Hills. The number of households was about sixty in February 1956. Their economy depends on the pan-leaf, orange and pineapple gardens, similar to that of the Shella people. 131 621 433

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

621 [Jatinga]

[175] This village was founded in 1905 by Khasi immigrants from the Jaintia Hills. At the entrance of the village, a bust of the founder, Lakhanbang Suchiang, [101] stands facing towards the east; it was erected on the occasion of the celebration [211] of their Golden jubilee, in November 1955. Houses are scattered along the [346] ridge of the moutain to the east and to the west; in the centre is the church. [771] All the inhabitants are Christians. Before the Partition this was one of the most modern and prosperous villages in Assam.

101 Jatinga provides a very interesting instance of the Khasi 'colonial' village. It is surrounded by villages of the Kuki, of the Zemi-Naga, and of the Cacharee, 121 who constitute the main population of the North Cachar Hills, and who are 621 tribes entirely different from the Khasi, in economy, social organization, language and culture. Therefore, Jatinga is like an island of Khasi community. I took this village as one of my fields, because I was particularly interested to discover how far the Khasi matrilineal organization is kept up in a community thus situated, surrounded by patrilineal tribes, and considerably modernized by Christianization and economic prosperity; and I was also interested in the process of formation of a new village, in comparison with Rinsibara and Joshipara in the Garo Hills.

Formation of the Present Population of Jatinga.

The first immigrants to Jatinga.

101 The main population of Jatinga, including the founder, originated in Bataw 166 village in the Jaintia Hills, twelve miles away from Jaintiapur, the capital of 175 the then Jaintia Rajas. This village is situated on the border of the Jaintia Hills and the East Bengal plain, the location being very similar to that of Shella, as are their culture and economy. In the later part of the nineteenth 621 century, some members of Bataw village moved to Borkhala, ten miles from Silchar, one of the biggest villages of the then Cacharee king.

These immigrants who came to Borkhala stayed there about fifteen years before they came to Jatinga. Kloribon, the first daughter of the founder's sister was born there. In November 1905, some Christian Khasi left Borkhala for Jatinga, acting on information gathered from a Welsh Mission at Haflong, that the land of present Jatinga was fertile and fit for their cultivation. They 166 were the first immigrants to Jatinga. The Government record names the following three persons as the first immigrants to Jatinga: Suchiang Lakhanbang, 551 Tariang, and Suchen Munik. In fact, according to the data which I collected 614 at Jatinga, Suchiang Lakhanbang was accompanied by the following persons (the names in brackets indicate the clans):

621 his wife, Misibon (Phanwar),[1]
175 his brother, Pryntah, and Pryntah's wife, Sintu (Rupsi),
his sister, Laptho, and Laptho's husband, Munik (Suchen) with their daughter, Kloribon, and Munik's younger brother, Sain.
his friend, Tariang.

Soon after their settlement, Sain, the brother of Munik, brought his wife Tahin (Suiam) from Jaintia. Misibon brought her younger sister, Diasibon. Tariang who came with Lakhanbang afterwards called his wife, Palong. But having spent some time there, they left eventually for another place, so that

1. Misibon was a native of the Cherrapunjee area of the Khasi Hills (not of Jaintia like the others). She was a school teacher at Cherrapunjee, and later became a teacher at a school near Jaintiapur, where she married Lakhanbang.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

like the Zemi-Naga, the Cacharee and the Kuki. But after the period of economic prosperity as I shall describe in the next section, the Jatinga people reached a rather high level of education, while most of the neighbouring tribes remained illiterate. Their standard of living likewise improved. Fashionable girls of Jatinga who have studied at the Convent school in Shillong, and speak English and Hindi, cannot marry half-naked tribesmen who work in the jungle. They prefer to intermarry with Moslem, Panjabee or Assamese who belong to amore sophisticated community, and through whom they can enjoy urban life. Thus the orientation of the intermarriage of the people of Jatinga has changed, along with the growth of Jatinga.

It should be noted that intermarriages came mostly through the contacts at Haflong, where people used to go once a week for the bazaar, rather than through direct contacts with neighbouring villages.

Economy of Jatinga and its Relation to Neighbouring Tribes.

It is very interesting to find two different kinds of economy in the same ecological background: Jatinga Khasi practise pan-leaf and orange cultivation and depend mainly on a trading economy, while the other neighbouring tribal peoples practise jhum cultivation, almost a subsistence economy. This situation has remained unchanged for the last fifty years since the establishment of Jatinga village.

The first Jatinga immigrants occupied one ridge of the mountain where the present Jatinga is situated. Formerly, this land belonged to the Zemi-Naga, one of the old inhabitants of the Cachar Hills, who possessed a vast jungle area for jhum cultivation. It seems that there was no objection to the Khasi occupying this small spot: it was apparently too small an area for the jhum cultivator —pan-leaf cultivation of the Khasi requires less than one twentieth of the land of the usual jhum cultivation. The Khasi who started pan-leaf cultivation were able to accumulate some capital, and after several years they started orange gardens. They had had experience of orange cultivation in their homeland, but this was the first time they had operated commercially.

The success of this orange cultivation was beyond their dreams. Hearing of good oranges at Jatinga, many Bengalee merchants from Dacca, Sylhet, Silchar and Gauhati began to come to buy them. Moreover, the village had the great advantage of being situated near the railway station. Oranges were sold by carloads. Unimaginable wealth came to the Jatinga people. Especially the founder's family, including his brother's and sister's, became extraordinarily wealthy; their income used to be Rs. 20,000 a year. The children were sent to the school which was established in the village and some were educated at colleges in Dacca, Sylhet and Shillong. The villagers had beautiful houses built by Manipuri and Bengalee carpenters. Actually the houses of Jatinga were known as some of the best construction in Assam.

Like the Shella people, they were managers of gardens and employed workers. Wealthy households used to engage several labourers annually, most of them from Jaintia where the Jatinga people had originated. These workers were provided with shelter in the servant quarters of their employer's house, but they had to provide meals for themselves. They were paid daily according to the work done. They were available to other households, when their employer had no work. Some labourers were also engaged locally among the Zemi-Naga, the Cacharee and the Kuki, though not as many as among the Jaintia. These local tribes were fairly well occupied by their jhum cultivation, and not used to being employed as workers. Therefore, most of them were not regular

16: McCormack E-4,5 (1956-1958) 1964
AR7 Khasi AR7
[P. 105 B]

NORTHERN UPLAND GROUPS

KHASIS[1]

Synonyms. *Cassia, Cossyah, Kasia, Kassia, Kassya, Kasya, Khasia, Khasiah, Khassi, Khassia, Khosia* 101

ORIENTATION. **Identification and location.** The term Khasi has often been applied to that entire 101 131 197 114 122

[1] This account of Khasi culture, contributed by Anna P. McCormack, is based on field work during 1956-58 in the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District. The author wishes to emphasize that her data are on the upland Khasis who inhabit the center of the District. She gratefully acknowledges support of the field work from the Department of Anthropology of the University of Chicago, the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Inc., and the Ford Foundation, for one of its Foreign Area Training Fellowships.

group of matrilineal and Mon-Khmer-speaking people who claim as their ancestral homeland the present-day United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District (within approximately 90° 47′ and 92° 52′ E. and 25° 5′ and 26° 5′ N.). This group includes the Jaintias (also Pnar or Synteng) in the southeast, who differ from the Khasis primarily in their duolocal residence pattern and less virulent forms of sorcery. (The Hadem in eastern Jaintia are a Kuki people.) It also includes the Lyngngams (also spelled Lynngam) in the west, who practice migratory swidden agriculture and certain peculiar funerary rites, and are said by Ehrenfels (1955) to be culturally intermediate between Khasis and Garos. Finally, it includes Bhois, Wars, and upland Khasis, which terms are primarily territorial. Bhoi country is the north-central part of the District, and is culturally complicated by the presence of Mikirs, Lalungs, and Nepalis. War country spans the entire southern length of the District, so that Wars divide into Jaintia Wars and Khasi Wars; of these, the Khasi Wars have traditionally transmitted property to sons as well as to daughters. The upland center of the District is the country of the Khasis proper, those whose culture provides the most useful model for interpreting the variations found elsewhere. [For general reference on all categories of Khasi culture, cf. Costa 1936 and 1937; also Gurdon 1907, especially for data on regional variations.] **Geography.** The District is 5,534 square miles of hilly tableland, intricately dissected by numerous rivers, and marked by significant ecological variation over very short distances. The tablelands step gently downward north from Shillong Peak, which at 6,445 feet is the highest point in the District, and over about 55 miles ease into the Brahmaputra valley where this is some 250 feet above sea level. To the south, the land slopes more steeply downward for about 20 miles, and then drops abruptly, in cliff and steep-slope formations, to the Ganges sea-level delta that begins at its north with Sylhet. The annual southwest monsoons drop torrential rains around Cherrapunji and Mawsynram villages (for Cherrapunji, a record 805 inches in 1861), but then, reaching Shillong 33 miles to the northeast, provide only about 100 inches per year. Rainfall is again greater in Bhoi, which shares the Brahmaputra valley climate. Climate is temperate on the high Shillong plateau, where it seldom freezes and never snows. To the north, climate becomes subtropical, forest is jungly, and fauna abound. The climate to the south is also subtropical. [Cf. Hooker 1891: chap. XXIX.] **Linguistic affiliation.** Khasi is one of the major Mon-Khmer languages, related to Mon, Khmer, Semang-Sakai, Nicobarese, and Palaung-Wa. The major Khasi dialects are Khasi, Jaintia, and Lyngngam, to which Grierson adds War. Further minor variations occur from village to village. The Khasis had no script until 1842, when the roman alphabet was successfully applied to the Cherrapunji dialect of Khasi proper. [Cf. Rabel 1961; Grierson 1903-28: 2; Bareh 1962.]

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17: Banerjee E-5 (1955) 1962 AR7 Khasi AR7
Smit

THE KHASI FESTIVAL OF 'POMBLANG'

S. BANERJEE

INTRODUCTION

The Khasi inhabit the upland of the central part of the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills district of Assam. They reckon descent through mother and the youngest daughter (Ka khadduh) of the house is the custodian of the ancestral property. Belief in the existence of spirits is strong among them and the causes of diseases are ascertained by taking recourse to the process of divination. They are ruled by different categories of Chief. The *Siem* is the highest official responsible for the administration of the state but a few small states are also governed by *Sirdars* with same powers as vested in the former although does not possess the same status. It is interesting to note that their priest whose rank is next to *Siem*, have also been allotted to perform this secular duties in some of the regions of the Khasi country. The Chief function through their respective council comprising elected members from different administrative units. He is rather subservient to this body as he is liable to be censured or even dismissed, if his activities are not in conformity with the Khasi traditional usage. Most of his directives are implemented through the assistance of his subordinates who are in-charge of various sections of the State. The Khasi place his grievance first to these junior officers for redress and justice, after which an appeal can be preferred to the *Siem* or any other higher officer as the case may be. One of the eminent States of the Khasi people known as Khyriem, where this festival is celebrated, consists of eight units for administrative convenience under the supervision of different grades of officials who participated in this celebration along with the *Siem* as representatives of the people.

The Khasi festival of *Pomblang* (Goat killing) described below used to be celebrated at one time in Shillong when the Khasi states of Khyriem and Myliem were not separated. The first chief of the Khyriem state U Singh Manik shifted his headquarters to Nongkrem village after partition of the kingdom, which occured before the arrival of the British. He again moved to Langkerdem after a brief stay at the village of Lyngshing. He performed this festival as long as he was there, transferring it again to Nongkrem where he re-settled again. It was celebrated here for a long time and consequently it was named after this village. Although the ruling family had later on shifted its residence about sixty years ago to the present village Smit, during the time of U Klur Singh, Siem, it is performed regularly as *Nongkrem dance* which was observed by the author from 21st June to 25th June, 1955.

OBJECT OF THE FESTIVAL

It is being held every year since the days of U Shillong who was supposed to be the founder of original Khyriem State. They celebrate it to perpetuate his memory and pay homage with a view to ensure rain, good harvest, eliminating diseases and famine. He was worshipped along with other ancestors with view to guide the present Chief in his discharge of his duties and for the welfare of the people.

The house of Siem (iing-sad) where the rites are observed, is considered sacred. It consists of a big-hall (shlur) in the centre, surrounded by rooms. One of these on the north is used as a kitchen room (iing-chetja) where ritual

18: Godwin-Austen G-3 (ca. 1872) 1875 AR7
Khasi AR7

FURTHER NOTES *on the* RUDE STONE MONUMENTS *of the* KHASI HILL TRIBES. By Major H. H. GODWIN-AUSTEN, F.R.G.S., F.Z.S., &c., Deputy Superintendent Topographical Survey of India. [With Plates ii. and iii.]

HAVING again visited the Khasi Hills since writing my last paper, I am enabled to give some further details regarding their

18: Godwin-Austen G-3 (ca. 1872) 1875 AR7
Khasi AR7

rude stone monuments. At the village of Nougshai, near Shillong, are to be seen some very striking monoliths; and although they do not come up quite to the length of those at Nurtiang (noticed by Dr. Hooker in his "Himalayan Journals"), yet they are very worthy of being mentioned. They stand on the open spur just above the village, and have been worked out of the beds of the Shillong sandstone series, and some of the smaller blocks have been taken from the conglomerate beds, the lowest in the series, and which come in, in the bed of the ravine, to the north of the spur. There are a number of monuments on this site, large and small, arranged both in line and on two sides of a square; the two largest have their central monoliths—height, 24 ft. 3 in.; width, 5 ft. 6 in.; thickness, 8 in.; and height, 23 ft. 2 in.; width, 2 ft. 9 in.; thickness, 1 ft., respectively.

Plate ii., which is taken from a photograph by Mr. William Robert, Assistant Surveyor in the Khasi Hills survey party, gives an excellent idea of the second largest structure, showing the very massive flat-stone, the "Mao Kynthai," in front. This structure consisted of thirteen upright stones, which could not all be brought into the field of the camera; but the six outside stones on the right are shown. Many of the slabs in the adjacent monuments have been overthrown and broken quite recently, perhaps by Sepoys and camp followers from the military station close by. At one time a mountain battery of Eurasian Artillery was quartered there, and I attribute the overthrow of so many of the stones in the neighbourhood to their handiwork, who would look on such amusement as a "great lark." The Sepoy (native of India) is not of a mischievous disposition; the European and half-European (uneducated) is markedly so. Thus the monument with the highest stone is imperfect, and it must, when perfect, have been a very handsome one. This is a sad pity, after the time and labour that must have been expended in its erection.

I did not observe any new slabs anywhere in the immediate neighbourhood. Nougshai must formerly have been a large and powerful village; it stands on a naturally very strong position, and old lines of fortification are to be traced on many sides, especially on the approach from the direction of the Falls of the Umiam. These old lines of defence are on a curious system: a ditch and bank have been carried forward from the main defences from 200 to 300 yards down the ridge of the spurs, thus effectually preventing an enemy working round the hill sides below the villages.

This fortified site points to a state of things in these hills when the relations between the large village communities or

18: Godwin-Austen G-3 (ca. 1872) 1875 AR7
Khasi AR7

clans were very much as we find them at the present day among the Nagas and Kukis, beyond and bordering our present extreme limits, viz. that of constant feud. They are now the quietest, most peaceful, and contented of all the hill people on the eastern frontier.

In my former paper I did not allude to the cairns in these hills, which I am inclined to think are works of greater age than the stone structures. The custom is one that certainly has long since been given up, for I could not obtain any satisfactory account of them. They are only to be seen on the northern side of the Khasi plateau, and Dr. Hooker, in his account of his trips to the Kollong Rock, did not fail to notice them. About Mairaug and towards Nougstoin they are very numerous, and always stand on commanding situations. On the path leading down the grassy spur to the stone monuments previously described, near Nougshai, is a very fine large example of a cairn, about eight feet high. They are usually plain hemispherical mounds of earth; but this one is faced all round at the base with slabs of stone about four feet high; they are frequently not higher than six feet. A distant view is shown in Plate iii.

Nowhere is there any trace of the earth that forms them having been excavated close by; it must, therefore, have been carried in some short distance, to avoid unsightly hollows near the structure. I should much like to have dug into one of these cairns, but was afraid to hurt the feelings of the people by doing so. They are very probably cineraries of an earlier form to those now made of stone, and this point it might be interesting to clear up.

Beyond the Khasi area no cairns are to be found, at least I had never come across any until visiting North Munipur last winter (1872—73), where, at the head of the Imphal river, on the direct road from Samaguting, are four fine cairns, all faced with large boulders. They are old, and the Nagas now living in the village near said they had been made by another clan of Nagas, who long ago had gone further north, and the site of whose village had been lately re-occupied by Kukis.

Mr. C. B. Clarke, in a paper read lately before your Institute, refers to the different forms of the cinerary in the Khasi Hills; but he has not quite exhausted the subject, or got further than I did, although with regard to the disposal of the ashes of the dead he gives some further interesting particulars.

As I think that drawings are of very great interest, and better exhibit the many different forms of bone depository or cinerary that have been adopted at different periods by tribes inhabiting localities very far apart, and often quite unconnected affinitively,

20: Hunter G-4 (no date) 1897 AR7 Khasi AR7

STATISTICAL ACCOUNT

OF THE

KHASI AND JAINTIA HILLS.

THE DISTRICT OF THE KHASI AND JAINTIA HILLS, called by the inhabitants Ka Ri Khási and Ka Ri Synteng, is situated between 26° 9′ 30″ and 25° 8′ 28″ north latitude, and between 91° 9′ 0″ and 92° 51′ 30″ east longitude. It contains an approximate area of 6157 square miles, and a population, according to the Census of 1872, of 141,838 souls. The principal town and Civil Station, which is also the headquarters of the Chief Commissioner of Assam, is Shillong, situated in 25° 32′ 39″ north latitude and 91° 55′ 32″ east longitude.

BOUNDARIES.—The Khási and Jáintiá Hills District is bounded on the north by the Districts of Kámrúp and Nowgong; on the east by Northern Cáchár, the Nágá Hills District, and the Kapilí river; on the south by Sylhet District; and on the west by the Gáro Hills.

JURISDICTION.—The Khási and Jáintiá Hills constitute a Political District, removed from the jurisdiction of the ordinary Criminal, Civil, and Revenue Courts, and of the offices established under the General Regulations and Acts. The administration of the country is vested in the Chief Commissioner of Assam, the Deputy-Commissioner of the Khási and Jáintiá Hills and his Assistants, and the native Chiefs, who are variously styled Siems, Wáhadádárs, Sardárs, Dollois, Pathors, and Lyngdohs. Siem, or more properly Seim, is derived from the Khási word for 'soul, life;' Wáhadárlár, from the Hindu term *ahlddár*, meaning an 'officer;' Lyngdoh strictly means a 'sacrificial soothsayer,' from the Khási *ong*, 'to speak,' and *doh*, 'flesh.' The District is divided into three portions, —namely, British possessions in the Khási Hills; petty dependent

21: Ehrenfels E-4,5 (1950) 1953 AR7 Khasi AR7

question and indeed has been compiled without knowledge of Professor CHATTOPADHYAY's work, and before he very kindly sent a private copy of this work, which had not been available to me previously.

The present paper offers data on the following subjects:

1. Khasi kinship terms from the Mawshai Khasi plateau-area in the Khyrim State, about 20 to 30 miles south-east of Shillong, which are in some minor details different from the Mawphlang data, collected by CHATTOPADHYAY, south-west of Shillong;
2. Comparative data from the War-Khasi;
3. from the plateau-area of Jowai in the Jaintia [1] Hills, and
4. from the War-Jaintia;
5. Aspects of the Khasi kinship terms, with special reference to the matrilineal order of society, and to the respective position of women and men there, especially the particular consideration which the biological relationship through the father receives in kinship terminology, in spite of the emphasis on the matrilineal structure in Khasi society (comp. term No. 1 of the list and its discussion in para 3.6 of the present paper, on p. 406).

The data were collected in field researches to which I was enabled by two Research Grants for comparative studies in matrilineal civilizations of India, given by the Viking Fund Inc. (now: Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research) in New York, during the periods 1949-50 and 1951-52. My gratefulness to the foundation for enabling me to carry out these field researches, as well as to the University of Madras, for granting me Sabbathical leaves for the same purpose, is here once more recorded.

My research programme was based on the first tentative working hypothesis, laid down in my book "Mother-right in India" [2], but includes also various other aspects of study which have not been pre-planned, or even considered there [3], as for instance also the present comparative study of kinship terms in areas of four Khasi dialects and their special significance to the Khasi matrilineal social system. The material was collected during a five weeks house-to-house study in the recently founded Plateau Khasi village Maw Syn Jri, during April and May 1950. This village consisted mostly of houses, owned by Khasi elder sisters and inhabited by them, with their families, after they had left the ancestral home in the main village Kharang, about one mile across the valley on the western side of the new settlement. The ancestral family houses there were in the possession of either the mother, or, if she was no more alive, the youngest daughter of the family, the *ka khun khaddu* [4].

[1] Jaintia, (Pnar or "Synteng") are the Khasi speaking eastern neighbours of the Khasi proper. As among the Khasi, so also among Jaintia the people in the cool plateau highlands are in many ways different from those who settled on the luscious tropical rainforests of the southern slopes, now situated just north of the East Pakistan frontier: — the so-called War-country, where economy is mainly based on jum-hoe gardening.

[2] EHRENFELS (1941).

[3] EHRENFELS (1950) (A), (1950) (B), (1950) (C), (1950) (D), (1950) (E), (1951) (A), (1951) (B).

[4] GURDON (1914), pp. 83, seq., CARYLON (1906), p. 11.

21: Ehrenfels E-4,5 (1950) 1953 AR7 Khasi AR7

105 [175] [197] 144 It will here be recalled that the Khasi are a matrilineal agricultural people, pre-literate until the advent of the British in the sixth decade of the 19th century, organized under democratically ruling *sirm*, or Khasi princes and chieftains and speaking an Austro-Asiatic language [14]. Their physical affinities are unmistakably mongoloid and quite distinct from the Assamese speaking plains-Indians, — but not from the other mountaineers of Assam, Nepal and even Burmah or China, with whom they feel to be more closely related, as with the Indian plainspeople, as some of the tribal designations in the following lists of terms for Non-Khasi testifies (comp. No. 41 as against No. 42, 43 and 43/a-c).

114 122 In the collection of the material, I was hampered by my inability to pick up the Khasi language sufficiently quickly, for conversation without the help of an interpreter, but on the other hand greatly eased by generous and voluntary assistance on the part of several Khasi friends, especially U Ekiman Singh, the President, Unitarian Union, Khasi- and Jaintai Hills and his (Khasi) wife, Ka Austria [15], who offered me hospitality in their house at Maw Syn Jri, during my stay there. Dr. H. LYNGDOH, Shillong, the author of detailed accounts on Khasi religious ceremonial and institutions [16], U Jeeban Roy, a leading Pnär gentleman of Jowei in the Jaintia Hills, Ka Ellen Giri, Principal, Govt. Basic Education Training Centre, Malki, Shillong, Ka Kongmen, Shillong, and U David Roy, Prime Minister (retd.), and a number of hospitable Wär Khasi and Wär-Jaintia pan-leaf cultivators in the southern slopes of the Khasi- and Jaintia Hills, especially from the villages Mawlai and Pado, also helped me greatly in my task. My thanks are due to all of them.

101 114 The data, submitted and briefly described in this paper were thus collected in four different areas.

1. The South-eastern corner of the Khasi-Hills (plateau-area),
2. the southern slopes of the Khasi Hills, the "Wär-Khasi country" between the Khasi plateau proper and the northern boundary of East Pakistan,
3. the central plateau of the Jaintia Hills, round its capital market Jowei, and
4. the southern slopes of the Jaintia Hills, the "Wär-Jaintia country" between these and a section of the northern boundary of East Pakistan, further to the East than area 2.

197 Slightly different Khasi dialects are spoken in these four regions, Jaintia (Pnär or "Syntreng") and Wär-Jaintia being more akin to each other, similarly as Plateau-Khasi and Wär-Khasi are.

101 105 The Pnär or Jaintias ("Syntreng" is a slightly opprobious designation, used by the Plateau-Khasi for these, their eastern neighbours) look back

[553] [14] SCHMIDT (1906).

[15] So named, because Austria was much in the news at the time of her birth, during the first world war, — a fact which illustrates the Khasi peculiarity to use either all her inventions as names for children, or to adopt such, from the Khasi point of view, outlandish words like "Ka Austria" or "Ka Mediterranean Sea" as names for their children.

[16] LYNGDOH (1937).

21: Ehrenfels E-4,5 (1950) 1953 AR7 Khasi AR7

on a historical past, different from that of the Khasi proper, the former having been ruled by the powerful, but somewhat Hinduised dynasty of the Jaintia Rajas until the Jaintia Wars of the British; the latter by small independent chiefs. Yet Jaintia social organization appears on the whole to preserve the matrilineal social structure clearer and to be less influenced by plains-acculturation, than that of the Khasi, though a few features of Brahmanical religious observances and also some traces of racial admixture are found in the immediate vicinity of Jowei, the former summer residence of the Jaintia Rajas. Stronger no doubt, than this influence, was that exercised by the British and non-Assamese Indians in the provincial capital Shillong since 1866. Methods of agriculture and other aspects of material civilization differ but little in the Jaintia- and Khasi plateau-areas.

The same cannot be said of both: the Wâr-Khasi and Wâr-Jaintias. Linguistically their affiliations are with the Khasi or Jaintias respectively, i. e. the plateau-areas. Economically, however, both Wâr-groups form a separate pan-leaf cultivating unit in the little accessible steep southern slopes of the Khasi- and Jaintia Hill massif. Both Wâr-groups live in the environment of luscious tropical flora and fauna, sharply differentiated from the cool, barren plateau with its perennial winds and the heroic, if solitary beauty of its highland heaths, which forms the background of both the Khasi- and Jaintia plateau-groups.

The age of the Wâr-Khasi and -Jaintias, as one independent economic, — and two half-independent dialectical linguistic entities, is an intricate problem. The two Wâr-groups subsist on pan-leaf cultivation as a money crop, grown in the thick tree-gardens as creepers; not on food-cultivation, as do the plateau-groups, because there is insufficient space on the steep slopes, for vegetable gardens or -fields. The pan-leaf cultivators therefore depend on food, purchased from outside. The slopes seem to have been uninhabited until not long ago. Yet pan-leaf chewing is such an integral part of Khasi life, that until quite recently, and occasionally even now, a distance between two places is not measured by the number of hours used for walking, but by the number of betelnut- and pan-leaf packages, consumed on the way. Also the common benediction among Khasi expresses the wish that so and so may eat pan in the Garden of God. Yet pan-cultivation and the settlements of the Wâr-people as pan-leaf cultivators in the southern slopes seem comparatively young. Pan-cultivation on the plateau is impracticable. It is therefore possible that pan was for a long time only a much valued import article from the plains, bartered against Khasi ore and iron tools, though it is now an export article from the Wâr-country, brought to the markets of the plains, by both Wâr-Khasi and Wâr-Jaintia women and men.

According to a tradition, across which I came among the Nonglamin clan of the Nongmuker village, the ancestors of the present Wâr people were on the plateau at a time when no pan-cultivation was going on in the slopes and none of the present big estates of pan-tree gardens was yet held by their present (Wâr-) owners. A not distant ancestor of a Nonglamin clan-member who about two or three generations ago told the story to U Siang (one of

21: Ehrenfels E-4,5 (1950) 1953 AR7 Khasi AR7

namely that male members of a matrilineal clan enjoy, among Khasi as among other matrilineal groups in India, a position which, far from unenviable, is a very high one in itself and doubly fortified by the respect which to the same male family member is being shown (*a*) in his capacity as the father of his children in his wife's clan (comp. term 8 of the list), and (*b*) in that of the maternal uncle (comp. terms 14, 14/*a*, 14/*b* and 26 and 28).

The terms 33/*b*, *c*, *g*, *h*, have classificatory character.

The term 33/*e* — *u kong* for the husband's older sister's husband is one of the exceptions of the rule that *kong* generally signifies an honoured older female relative but, as in this case, also her husband (comp. term 26).

Term 36/*a u pa* (father) in its usage among Pnár (Jaintia), also for stepfather is significant. A Pnár child has no legal clan-relationsihp with his/her biological father, who belongs to another (matrilineal) clan than the child and mother. Yet the honorific term *pa* is, among Pnár, also applied to a stepfather, although neither legal, nor biological but merely ideological relationship via the mother, exists between stepfather and -child. This use of the word *pa* thus seems to emphasize both, firstly the integration of the matrilineal family structure, by making an unrelated stepfather to be looked upon as father, owing to his relationship with Ego's mother and, secondly the important sociological and psychological position of the father in this matrilineal family structure which appears to go back to an old tradition among the Pnár.

Term 41 — *para 'riew lum* [33] (Assamese hill tribals) are characteristically termed *para* (Brethren), although they are different in many respects, from the Khasi, yet considered as definitely nearer related than all other neighbours, grouped under the

Term 43 — *dkhar* (plainspeople) [34], — a term which varies in emotional content from contempt pure and simple to an attitude, somewhat parallel to what ordinary English usage would generally associate with the expression "continental". Marriages of Khasi girls and boys with *dkhar* do occur, though infinitely rarer than marriages of (especially educated) Khasi girls with (educated) *para 'riew lum*, Nepalese, Gurkha or Chinese boys. One of the reasons which is usually being given for this preference for non-Indians is by no means colour-prejudice, but the taboo on either beef or pork which most *dkhar ïong* [35] (Indians, Hindus or Muslims, respectively) observe; a taboo which they generally extend to their Khasi wives, thus preventing them from enjoying two favourite Khasi national dishes. Another more psychological reason is the overbearing treatment of wives, which is generally ascribed to *dkhar ïong*, more even than to *dkhar li* [36]. It is in this connection

[33] Literally: Brethren Humans Hill.

[34] With Dkhar are here meant the plainspeople as such; — not the Khasi Dkhar (or Khar) clans which are mostly, if not always, descended from ancestresses who had been captured in the plains and brought to the Khasi Hills; comp. CHATTOPADHYAY (1941), pp. 30/31 and EHRENFELS (1950/*A*), pp. 33/34.

[35] Literally: Plainspeople black.

[36] Literally: Plainspeople white.

G 342 space about three quarters of the width of the house, was partitioned off by mat walls. It served as a room for the married couple. The unmarried women sleep near the fireplace; the young men in the bachelor's house. Adjacent to the room of the couple, a small door opened on a small roofed veranda with a low gallery (Plate X, 3) which had no exit. The rear post was at- [531] tractively carved. According to Dalton, the Garo have a special talent for this kind of work. The [231] space under the house piles by the lower side of the slope, at the end of the house, was used for the oxen. Higher up, where they had less space, they kept the pig sty.

The Garo, like the Kachin and also other mountain tribes, have a second smaller house on their fields, frequently far distant. They live in these houses during tillage time and also to guard the crops. According to Playfair they have in more recent days even shown a tendency to abandon the village houses permanently in favor of the field huts.

They try to build the huts as high above the ground as possible in order to have a wider view, but mainly as a protection of the occupants against nocturnal attacks by elephants. To achieve this the Garo often use high trees instead of piles and build their houses into the forked branch stumps (73).

73. In Playfair, p. 36 is an excellent illustration of such a tree house (borang). These tree houses, of course, have nothing to do with primitive customs (Schurtz, ibid., p. 433; Brigham, ibid., pp. 58 et seq.).

K 101 197 Bordering the settlements of the Garo in the east live the Khasi, who linguistically must be linked to the Palaung, Wa, and Talaing in Burma.

31: Scherman--71 E-4 (no date) 1915 AP1 Burma
Khasi AK7

101 131 Of the sub-divisions of these people, the Khasi proper (74)--1911: 120,933--live in the Khasi

74. P.R.T. Gurdon, The Khasis (London, 1907), pp. 1 ff. about house construction pp. 30 ff.

Hills, the kindred Synteng in the Jaintia Hills. The Lynn Gam who are classified by Gurdon as half Khasi and half Garo live in the western part of the Khasi Hills, the people who inhabit the low hill country in the north of the district, which is usually called "Bhoi," are named the Bhoi. Many of them are really Mikir. My observations of the Khasi are limited to the surrounding of Shillong from where I visited the village of Nongkrem which is about 13 kilometers away (75).

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75. Cf. C. Becker, Anthropos 4 (1909), pp. 892-902.

The place is located in a trough between low hills which are covered by large stone boulders. A small water course runs through the village. The huts are partly built along the slopes of the hills which surround the village. The houses (Plate X, 4) all stand on small plots of land which are separated from each other by low stone walls; a narrow passage leads to them from the front side. Sometimes this passage is completely missing, in which event one has to climb over the wall. The houses stand on foundations of layers of irregular stone boulders. The walls are made of wooden boards--sometimes of bamboo--and are covered on the outside by grass. Grass is also used for roofing. Each strand is tied individually to bamboo poles, as in Burma (not as in Bengal where it is squeezed together between bamboo poles). Especially typical is the form of the roof; it is high and steep in the middle and the roof ridge is curved. The roof slopes down

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